



## **HFLA Strategic Framework – 2021 Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

In 2019, when HFLA of Northeast Ohio began to consider updating its strategic plan, no one could have anticipated the global pandemic that was soon to commence. The paradigm shifts that took place in March 2020 as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States led HFLA’s Board of Directors to the realization that developing a “strategic framework” – as opposed to a conventional strategic plan – would enable the organization to engage in strategic thinking while at the same time maintaining the flexibility required to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances in the economy, in society, and in the lives of our borrowers and potential borrowers. This document provides a high-level overview of the priorities that emerged from our comprehensive yearlong process.

Our thoroughgoing efforts not only produced a strategic framework/work plan for the immediate future but also resulted in the restatement of HFLA’s mission and vision and the redefinition of our service area with a focus on Cuyahoga and the six contiguous counties. Additionally, we articulated a set of organizational values affirming our commitment to human dignity, respectful relationships, creativity, organizational sustainability, and the Jewish ideals of justice, righteousness, and the goal of “repairing the world.”

Another important outcome of this careful planning process was the landmark decision to amend the Constitution of our 117-year-old organization in order to open Board membership to persons outside the Jewish faith who share our mission and values, our commitment to equitable lending, and our desire to expand opportunities for access to capital for residents of Northeast Ohio.

## Mission

HFLA of Northeast Ohio provides interest-free loans to promote the economic self-sufficiency and growth of Northeast Ohioans who are unable to access safe and fair lending resources.

## Vision

We seek to create a more equitable Northeast Ohio where everyone has equal access to capital and all residents can participate in the growth and prosperity of their communities.

## Values

- We honor Jewish ideals of Tzedek (justice), Tzedakah (righteousness or charity), and Tikkun Olam (the goal of repairing the world).
- We respect the inherent dignity and worth of every human being.
- We embrace and cultivate relationships – with borrowers, partner organizations, and donors.
- We strive to be creative in response to change.
- We ensure our sustainability as an evergreen source of funds for those in need.

## Desired Outcome

More opportunities for equitable lending and access to capital in Northeast Ohio

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*Or visit our website: <https://interestfree.org/>*

<b><i>PRODUCTS</i></b>
<b>GOAL 1: Ensure that loan policies and products align with HFLA goals and values. (e.g., relationship lending)</b>
<b>Objective 1.1:</b> Refine loan policy to reflect focus on seven-county footprint emerging community needs
<b>Objective 1.2:</b> Create more flexibility in loan policies to allow the organization to serve significant emerging community needs
<b>Objective 1.3:</b> Improve procedures to encourage better relationships with borrowers and (connection to) holistic support
<b>Objective 1.4:</b> Identify partners with higher Return On Investment (ROI) and ensure that we are providing high ROI to our partners as well
<b><i>ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</i></b>
<b>GOAL 2: Regularly assess and evaluate the portfolio of loans, organizational activities, and operations to ensure an effective organization, positive impact on borrowers and the community, and alignment with the organization's values</b>
<b>Objective 2.1:</b> Become more proficient in collecting and utilizing data for decision making (e.g., by tracking data in the categories of lending, repayment, and outreach within the organization’s revised footprint and creating communication logs to record number of touchpoints with borrowers)
<b>Objective 2.2:</b> Ensure the organization has adequate capacity to manage this labor-intensive form of lending
<b>Objective 2.3:</b> Diversify Board
<b><i>DEVELOPMENT</i></b>
<b>GOAL 3: Diversify revenue streams in order to ensure the sustainability of HFLA</b>
<b>Objective 3.1:</b> Increase the percent of overall revenue from individual donors
<b>Objective 3.2:</b> Increase the number and quality of stewardship activities, including plans to engage past borrowers to encourage them to become donors
<b>Objective 3.3:</b> Activate board members to become fundraisers and friend-raisers
<b><i>POSITIONING AND COMMUNICATIONS</i></b>
<b>GOAL 4: Build and strengthen the reputation of HFLA as a preferred and trusted partner and resource in the seven designated counties</b>
<b>Objective 4.1:</b> Raise the visibility of HFLA among potential borrowers, donors, and the general public
<b>Objective 4.2:</b> Successfully advocate for legislation and policies that address the needs of our borrowers
<b>Objective 4.3:</b> Identify industry-wide (both finance industry and community support organizations) best practices as they relate to supporting borrowers